



Once More Unto the Breach

Thoughts on the Edge of the Breach: It's hard to believe, but yet another year has passed. I rang in 2002 with a few friends in the Republic of Korea. This year, I will ring in 2003 with friends and family at Fort Knox. Many of you will spend this New Year away from family and friends in isolated desert encampments or frozen hillsides defending freedom's frontier. My best wishes to you.

A year can make a huge difference! This time last year, the fight to rid al-Qaeda and the Taliban from Afghanistan was near completion, the Crusader artillery system was on the verge of deployment, and the choice for the Army's new weapons system for the interim brigade combat team (IBCT) remained undecided.

In the year 2003, Afghanistan will be ruled by an elected government with support from coalition forces and the United States, the Crusader has been cancelled, and the new Stryker-equipped IBCT's are being deployed. I wonder what lies in store for us in 2003. I am sure whatever it is, the Armored force will be a part of any national strategic strategy.

In an effort to keep evolving and transcending toward the future, *ARMOR* is exploring and implementing ideas to keep pace with the Army's Transformation efforts. Many of the Army's professional journals have ceased publication and more are fading away. *ARMOR*'s staff understands the 112-year history of the magazine and is determined to build on its legacy. New software enables us to expand *ARMOR*'s horizons and offer our readers a more appealing and easier-to-read journal. Better paper, more color (when I can afford it), innovative layouts and designs, and great authors will keep *ARMOR* on the leading edge of professional publications.

What we will not change are the issues and concerns that affect the Armor branch. Whether its advocating changes in doctrine, tactics, and equipment or discussions on the future of the Armor force, this journal will be at the forefront in challenging professional discourse. Armor branch and, more importantly, the Army value your intrinsic contributions as readers and authors. *ARMOR* will continue to be

the forum where thoughtful, professional, and compassionate debate can occur. There is no room in today's uncertain environment for stifling ideas; too much is on the line.

In recent months, we have received some excellent and relevant articles. In this issue, Major Michael Kasales and CW2 Matthew Gray write an excellent article on ISR operations to facilitate early entry operations by the Stryker Brigade Combat Team (SBCT). Their article presents an interesting look at how the SBCT is implementing new digital technology to become more successful during the ISR process and ultimately during combat operations. Kasales and Gray also provide helpful tips on how a battalion staff can maintain digital skill proficiency — a skill that is as perishable as a tank platoon maneuvering through a defile.

Speaking of defiles: ever wonder how to get your force through a restrictive mountain pass? Captain Mike Sullivan provides some answers. Many of you heroes have had the opportunity to pass through Regulator Valley at the Combat Maneuver Training Center at Hohenfels. I have, and it wasn't a pretty sight for my tank company. I recall that during one opportunity to excel, my company was pretty much "MILES" decapitated. Sullivan draws on his experience as an observer controller to enlighten us on how to successfully maneuver a force through a defile. Many of his lessons are applicable to urban terrain as well; techniques that some of our forces might be called on to use in the near future.

The Battle for Rorke's Drift happened 124 years ago in January 1879. This battle, pitting the British against the native Zulus, has been thoroughly analyzed throughout the years. Captain Arch Ratliff III, USMC, takes a different and innovative route in describing this action. I think you will enjoy his creative flair in examining the lessons learned and outcome of this battle.

Time is getting short. Please keep the flow of articles and letters coming. I wish everyone peace and prosperity for the New Year.

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